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Artistic Foundations of Jan Bonawentura Krasiński

The primary aim of my PhD project is possibly the most complete analysis of artistic foundations created in the circle of Jan Bonawentura (Dobrogost) Krasiński (1639-1717). The foundation activity of Krasiński can be traced on the basis of a number of preserved objects, for instance: the palace in Warsaw, former Franciscan monastery (with Krasiński's tomb) and the parish church in Węgrów, the monastery of Apostolic Union of Secular Priests in this city, or objects founded in parish church in Krasne. The project has three broad research goals. The fundamental issue is an attempt to recognize the mutual relations between the founder and artists working for him, especially the possible impact Krasiński had on the final form of works of art. The problem framed this way will allow to answer the questions about functions, uniqueness (or typicality) and the eventual impact of the Krasiński's foundations on later art. It will help to recognize the character of Krasiński's activity – was it the real patronage or only an element of ostentation of social position? The second goal of the research is to try to look at the activity of artists working for Krasiński as well as at their works from a new perspective. Researchers often duplicate certain scheme and accept some of the predecessors' findings uncritically. In older literature the 17th century art in Poland is treated in a selective way (for various reasons, including ideological ones). Knowledge about almost every artist working for Krasiński requires deepening, to mention only Tilman van Gameren, Andreas Schlüter, Jan Reisner, Michelangelo Palloni or Andreas Mackensen. Moreover, only recent studies have indicated, ignored so far, but extremely important ways of passing models from Netherlands and Germany. Intensive construction works in Warsaw and Berlin during 1680's were not compared yet.

Those two issues of future dissertation are connected with the third one, which is an attempt to present Jan Bonawentura Krasiński's foundations in comparison to similar activity in Polish-Lithuanian Commonwealth and Europe. The problem featured in this part will be the question about similarity and differences in self-presentation, and also reaching for various formal solutions. The "dialogue" seen on a various levels between realizations made for king and Krasiński also seems to be an important issue. A frequently repeated statement about the "Sarmatian" character of the works he founded definitely requires a second thought.

PhD project with such complexed subject of research – from decorative arts through paintings and sculptures to architecture and historical studies – must present wide methodological approach. The main way of getting answers to the presented problems will be the analysis of available archival sources. An essential element of future dissertation will be formal analysis of a work of art that is still crucial for the history of art. For this purpose, comparative analyzes and research on the impacts to which artists were subjected, will be conducted, also formal and ideological models should be recognized. On this basis, it will also be possible to draw conclusions about the role of Krasiński in the creation of art. Therefore, some part of the project will be literary analysis needed to recognize topoi and usus in old-Polish ekphrase and panegyrics. To understand the goals and measures undertaken by Krasiński, some findings of social history of art, sociology and studies on image-making might be helpful. Finally, criticism of some findings in the light of the history of science will be crucial. Polish art history underwent various changes and was the subject to various limitations. Properly conducted criticism of earlier findings will allow to highlight areas of research that have not been explored so far.

During the Forum, first and foremost, I would like to discuss the self-presentation of wealthy nobility and aristocracy in 17th century Central Europe. The formal solutions used in works of art founded by Krasiński seem unique in the Polish-Lithuanian Commonwealth (in terms of form and ideology) - I would like to compare them to similar realizations in the rest of Europe. The study of artistic patronage in Poland is just developing, so it may be fruitful to come across with people who come from the academic centers with more experience on this field.